

the United States must do more to ensure that its aid is utilized to the greatest effect possible.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, more than 140,000 people, including 7,000 children, have been killed. Nearly 2.5 million refugees have fled to neighboring countries, including 1.2 million children. Within Syria, nearly seven million people have been displaced from their homes and 19 million are in need of emergency food support. It is projected that by the end of this year, 75 percent of the Syrian population will need humanitarian assistance.

The civilian population inside Syria faces systematic starvation, shelling of residential neighborhoods, government use of chemical weapons, and threats from improvised barrel-bombs filled with explosives and dropped by military helicopters into residential areas.

In the dozens of refugee camps now surrounding Syria, food remains scarce, access to sanitation and clean water is limited, and diseases like polio—on the verge of eradication worldwide—have resurfaced.

The United States has rightly pledged and contributed a combined \$1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the crisis. These funds are critical for the Syrian people caught in the middle of the conflict. Their survival, and indeed the future stability of the region, hangs in the balance. As a leader in the international community, we must ensure that these funds are used efficiently and distributed in a manner that reaches as many people as possible.

I recently heard a story about a school in the Aleppo Province that continued to hold classes despite the war raging around it. When the school's funding inevitably ran out—and with international aid not immediately available—extremists in the area also fighting the Assad regime came forward with the resources that the school needed. In return, they demanded that the school dispose of its moderate textbooks for more politically-charged texts, and required the teaching of the Koran.

Accepting assistance from extremist groups in exchange for loyalty is a decision faced by Syrians on a daily basis. For most civilians, the radical views expressed by the extremists are not in line with their own moderate views. Many are simply trying to carry on with their lives.

Organizations like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have had considerable success in distributing school materials, food, medical supplies, and vaccines. However, Syria is a war zone, and these large-scale operations are often not equipped to distribute materials and aid at the local level—like the school in Aleppo—where they are needed most.

But, imagine if these organizations could know which schools had exhausted their resources, which hospitals were in immediate danger of running out of supplies, and which neighborhoods were being most affected by the lack of incoming food relief. Making this process more efficient is no small task, but it is possible. If we are to avoid greater catastrophe in Syria, it is also necessary.

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, I have urged Congress and the President's administration to increase cooperation with Syrian non-government organizations (NGOs) to get aid where it needs to go. Increased engagement with Syrian and Syrian-run groups

is essential to expanding assistance inside Syria and making every dollar of foreign aid count. Syrian aid groups are now working in nearly every sector of the humanitarian response, delivering flour to bakeries, medical supplies to field clinics, and helping to protect refugees.

Already, USAID and other NGOs in the region rely on information and distribution networks of local aid groups to deliver supplies to areas most in need. Empowering these Syrian groups will make our impact on the region even greater. These groups have the most at stake and work at great personal expense and risk.

The Department of State and USAID should work together to establish training, capacity building, and aid delivery partnerships with Syrian relief organizations in order to expand their operations. With proper oversight and strict training on the international standards governing the delivery of aid, the United States can enable hundreds of Syrian civilians to take greater control of their country's future while assisting those inside Syria who are not reachable by other means.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has shown leadership in providing aid for the humanitarian crisis in Syria, but we must do more with the international community and Syrian refugee host nations to improve our aid delivery systems while pressuring the Assad regime and its supporters. As the war drags on with no end in sight, time is in fact running out.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM/UI EXTENSION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2014

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Women's Working Group on Immigration Reform I rise to support the women in my district and around the country who are fasting for a vote on reform legislation.

Mr. Speaker, our system has been broken for far too long and now is the time to fix it.

Every day hardworking women all over America are living in fear that they will be separated from their family. They have been systematically left out of the programs that their tax dollars help support.

That is why I am proud to have joined Congresswoman MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM to introduce the HEAL Act that would guarantee access to safety net programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Mr. Speaker, instead of bringing up bills to create jobs and grow the economy, Republicans continue to play political games—bringing up GOP message bills to nowhere.

It is time to pass comprehensive immigration reform. It is time to pass an extension of Unemployment Insurance.

We have the votes. Let's do it now.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICHARD F. CROSSIN, RECIPIENT OF 2014 THE GREATER WILKES-BARRE FRIENDLY SONS OF ST. PATRICK MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in acknowledgment of Richard "Rich" F. Crossin, who on March 14, 2014 will receive the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Man of the Year award. Each year the Friendly Sons recognizes a person who has distinguished themselves in the community through hard work and charitable efforts, and Rich Crossin is an exemplary selection.

Mr. Crossin is the son of Ann and the late Joseph Crossin and a resident of Kingston, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Bishop O'Reilly High School, and continued his education at York College, where he received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1978.

Rich has spent much of his career at Bonner Chevrolet, Inc., which was started by his grandfather, John R. Bonner, in 1932. Rich now serves as President of the family business and works alongside his brothers Joe, Tom and Paul. In the past 35 years, Bonner Chevrolet has grown to be one of the largest new and used automobile inventories in the area, under Rich's leadership.

Along with being a leader in the business community, Rich has also been a pillar of his local service community. He served as president of the West Side Jaycees and has also worked with Big Brothers Big Sisters for several years, helping the group mentor many disadvantaged youth.

Rich and his wife Virginia have three children—Andrew, Julia, and Elizabeth—all of whom currently attend high school. Andrew, a senior at Holy Redeemer High School, is a member of the golf team which competed and won the State Championship title. Rich's daughters Julia and Elizabeth both attend Wyoming Valley High School, and were longtime dancers with the Emerald Isle Step Dancers and had the opportunity to dance in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City.

Northeastern Pennsylvania is stronger as a community because of citizens like Rich Crossin, and I am proud to recognize his life's contributions.

A TRIBUTE TO NADINE TRUJILLO—28TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2014

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation's women. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Nadine Trujillo of Silver Lake.